

The Three Temptations of Christ Matthew 4:1-11

Thank you for joining me for "It's a Good Life." Today, we want to look at our study number 2 in the life of Christ, and this would be the temptation of Christ. Now, in Matthew chapter 4, verses 1-11, we're going to read all of those verses. It says:

*¹Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. ²And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. ³And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. ⁴But he answered and said, **It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.** ⁵Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, ⁶And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. ⁷Jesus said unto him, **It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.** ⁸Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; ⁹And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. ¹⁰Then saith Jesus unto him, **Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.** ¹¹Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.*

You can also read Luke chapter 4, verses 1-14. Something I find interesting, first of all, is that Jesus was led up into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit to be tempted of the devil. It was no accident that He was in the wilderness, because the Holy Spirit led Him there. And it tells us there that He was there forty days and forty nights. Now, we're going to look at the three temptations that we read of in the Scriptures. We're going to look at

those today, But I would have you know that I believe that, as Jesus went into the wilderness, it says in verse 2 of Luke chapter 4, *Being forty days tempted of the devil*, Jesus not only had the three temptations that we're going to look at today, but the Bible says that He was tempted for forty days. In other words, it was a bombardment by the devil to try and discredit God, to try and discredit Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world.

We're going to look at the temptations in just a moment, but before the temptation, we want to review just a little. First of all, before the temptation, the prophecy of the forerunner of the Messiah was fulfilled. In Isaiah 40, verses 3-5, we see the prophecy there and in Matthew 3, verses 1-3, we see that prophecy was fulfilled.

Then we read and study about the baptism of Jesus Christ. Matthew 3:13 says, *Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John...* that's John the Baptist... *to be baptized of him.* And we know that Jesus was baptized not for repentance, not because He had done something wrong, not because of sin in His life, but He was baptized because this was a mark of God upon Him, the anointing of the LORD. In other words, it was more like an ordination so that people could see that Jesus was the Son of God and He was the Messiah and He was going to start at that point with His earthly ministry. Remember, the heavens opened and a Spirit like a dove descended upon Jesus, and there was a voice from Heaven saying, "Thou art my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." You find that, of course, in Mark chapter 1, verses 9-11.

Well, the prophecy was fulfilled of the baptism of the coming of the Messiah and we see also the leading of the Holy Spirit here, and we've read some of that already. Matthew 4:1, *Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.*

And now we look at the three specific temptations, the temptation of Christ, and they're described in Matthew and Luke. We've read this.

Satan had a strategy. The first testing that we read of was to turn stones into bread, Matthew chapter 4, verses 2-3, talks about that. And this first testing targeted Christ's urgent physical need. He was there forty days and forty nights and He was there without eating. You read of that, of course, in Luke chapter 4 and verse 2. It says, *Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered.* Matthew 4:2 says, *And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.*

Well, the devil appealed to His physical need, but notice Jesus' response to the devil. Matthew 4:4 says, *But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*

Deuteronomy 8:3 says, *And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna...* Now, of course, Jesus is quoting Deuteronomy chapter 8 and verse 3.

You know, the devil is really stupid when you think about it. He's really dumb, because here he is trying to have a contest with the Son of God, the Man of God, the One who was brought into this world to save those who are lost. Here the devil is arguing with the Word. John 1:1 says, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* Jesus Christ is God, and the Bible goes on to tell us in the book of John that *the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

And, of course, that's Jesus Christ. Well, here is the devil trying to point out some things to Jesus, the One who wrote the Word; He is the Word. And that's the reason I can say beyond a shadow of a doubt the devil is stupid. He's ignorant. We think of him as being powerful; he is powerful. God will let him go so far, but then we have to say, "Devil, you're not gonna win. You're not as smart

as you think you are." Especially when we read something like this about the devil.

Well, Jesus had that response to the devil, and then what can we learn from this first testing of Christ? Satan does not want us to live by the Word and will of God. The first temptation to command stones to become bread, Satan wants us to put our own physical needs above our spiritual needs, whereas God wants us to seek Him first and then He will take care of all the needs that we have, according to Matthew chapter 6 and verse 33: *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

Well, the second testing is Matthew chapter 4 and verse 6, the first part of that verse: *And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down...* Well, this testing appealed to Christ's human desire for recognition and approval. Matthew 4:6 goes on to say, *If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, he shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.*

Well, Jesus did not need the recognition of man. In John chapter 2, verses 23-25, it says, ²³*Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did.* ²⁴*But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men...and listen to this now...* ²⁵*And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.* He didn't need their testimony. He does not need man's testimony. Jesus Christ is God. He is the Son of God.

He already had the recognition of the Father. Remember? In Mark chapter 1, verse 11, *And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

Well, what is Jesus' response to this second temptation of the devil? Jesus' response to the devil is found in verse 7 of Matthew 4: Jesus said unto him, *It is written again...* now here He is. He's quoting the Scripture to the devil.... *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.* Deuteronomy

chapter 6 and verse 16 is where He's quoting from.

Well, what do we learn about this second testing of Christ? We learn that Satan does not want us to trust the Lord our God. The second temptation to throw Himself down from the temple pinnacle... Jesus was given this temptation.... Satan wants us to tempt God by doing what He never really told us to do and then to foolishly think that God will step in to protect us. Now, God wants us to simply trust Him and do that which is right, leaving the results with God. *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God*, the Scripture says.

Well, the third temptation... Matthew chapter 4, verses 8-9, talks about this, and it says, *8Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; 9And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.* Well, Jesus didn't need the immediate attainment of His spiritual goal of making the entire world His own kingdom of peace and love. Christ's answer to Satan was, *Get thee hence*, Matthew chapter 4 and verse 10. Once again, he quotes Deuteronomy 10:20.

What can we learn from the third testing of Christ? Satan does not want us to worship God alone. Now, in this third temptation, we see that Satan wants us to worship and honor him in order to achieve a higher position or station in life. It makes no difference what you have... money, gold, silver, whatever. Satan wants to give you that. Satan will do anything he can to get you to worship him, but believers must never bow down to anything or anyone except the Lord our God. He alone deserves and demands our wholehearted allegiance. We must never seek to advance ourselves at the cost of abandoning God and that which is right.

And we see at the end of the temptation, at the end of the forty days, that Satan loses again. After Christ's temptation, Jesus said to Satan, *Get thee hence*, Matthew chapter 4 and verse 10. What was Satan's response? Nothing. Satan said to Jesus nothing. Matthew 4:11 says, *Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and*

ministered unto him. Satan was defeated once again by Jesus Christ and we need to understand this.

What are we to do to defeat the devil? We are to resist, stand against the devil, according to James 4:7. Secondly, we are to be sober, serious, according to I Peter 5:8. It's not a game. And third, we are to be vigilant. That means to be alert, I Peter 5:8. And then we see we are to stand against or to resist the devil, being firmly fixed in the faith, according to I Peter 5:9. *Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God*, according to the Scriptures, and we need to stand firm, trusting in our Lord and Savior, and He will help us to overcome the devil. We are to resist the devil. Second Peter 3:18 says, *But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.* We are to hide the Word of God in our hearts.

Jesus Christ withstood the devil. He is the Word of God. He wrote the Word of God, and that's what we are to resist the devil with. We are to study the Word of God and hide it in our hearts that we can resist whatever the devil throws at us.

Are you doing that today? God loves you and He wants to give you, as a saved person, as a child of God, everything that you desire. He wants to give you peace and joy, and He wants to help you to understand that you need to be serving Him wholeheartedly today. And look up for your redemption draweth nigh.

Ask Him into your heart if you've never trusted Him. "Lord, come into my heart. I receive You as Savior." If you'd like to know more about how to be saved or more about the Christian life, look at our website, www.LRWM.org, and you'll find some Bible study helps there. Write to me, Lewis Woodard, 497 Judith Avenue, Fruitland Park, FL 34731, and I'll send you a transcript of this program.

Until the next time, may the Lord bless you richly is my prayer.